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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

TWO SUGGESTIONS

DEAR EDITOR: Nurses should always wash off the outside of milk bottles before placing them in the refrigerator, as the hands of the milkman may be covered with germs.

Sometimes in summer, a nurse finds herself in the cottage of a hotel or club, caring for a patient. One day last summer I was sent to a summer resort with a small child, suffering with colitis. The child had many stools during the day and we were in a cottage without a toilet, the only one accessible being across the lawn in the main hotel. It was very embarrassing to carry a slop jar back and forth, as there were always a number of young people out under the trees. Also the weather was far too hot to wait until after dark as these discharges would attract flies. So I went down to the village and purchased a small tin pail with a lid, which I could slip under the commode. Then, as I also carried broth and milk back and forth in a similar pail, no one could detect one from the other.

Massachusetts.

M. E. H.

HOSPITALS MUST ECONOMIZE

DEAR EDITOR: I have often thought that the use of hospital supplies could be greatly economized if all the staff would coöperate and help reduce needless expenditure. Every effort should be made to save waste always, but at this time it is an absolute duty, as war has been declared and the country has great expense and trouble to contend with. The suggestion-box which many offices and factories have, gives employees a chance to help the owners decrease waste and expense. The company pays a dollar or so to the person who makes a suggestion which is accepted. This inducement is necessary, for few workers are altruistic enough to spend their spare time for their employers' good. Into the suggestion-box are put ideas the workers have thought out, that might improve the business in any way. The following story is a good example of this. A business man gave a bright office boy in his employment \$10 for a suggestion that would save the firm \$20 or more a day! The boy was delighted with his reward and would tell his fellow-workers of his good fortune. Many of them would bring similar plans to their employer in hope of the same reward. "It pays to advertise" seems to be the business men's motto and *they* know that coöperation with the workers oils the wheels of business and helps the machinery run smoothly. Why cannot hospitals adopt more business-like methods and allow the nurses in training to express their opinions? Many will reply to this question by saying that hospitals are run on military lines and are disciplined accordingly; that may be so, but in both army and navy, the chief in command gives some of his time to complaints of his officers and men and will quietly consider new plans. In the average training school the nurses receive a very cold reception if they venture to make any suggestions and may

even receive censure. Surely a broader-minded attitude would do no harm to any one. The nurses' suggestions might save the hospital large sums. The authorities could refuse any plans that they knew would not work well, but if nurses felt that their opinions were valued, they would be encouraged to make efforts to save waste of the hospital's supplies.

New York.

A PUPIL NURSE.

PRIVATE DUTY DURING TRAINING

DEAR EDITOR: I was much interested to read the advice given in the Department of Public Health Nursing in the JOURNAL for April regarding the necessity of doing at least some private nursing before taking up public health work. The statement is there made that private nursing or district nursing or both are absolutely essential for the nurse who intends to take up this work, no matter how good her hospital training has been, that many nurses who have undertaken public health nursing without it have failed. The implication is that the nurse as graduated from the training school is not fitted to take up anything but hospital work, since she has done no private nursing, which is held to provide the best, nay, indispensable training for district and public health nursing. Nowhere have I seen the advantages of experience in private nursing better set forth than in this place. The account given is most convincing. Why, then, not make private nursing a part of the curriculum and graduate nurses fit to enter any field of nursing? How much better is it for the patient in the home to have an inexperienced recent graduate, confident, full of hospital routine, and standing for the first time on her own responsibility than an undergraduate, whose habits are not so fixed as to be immovable, and who is still under supervision and accountable for her work to the training school? Why should the nurse immediately after graduation have to take a post-graduate course in private nursing, even if she is paid a good price for it, when she wants to be getting started in her own line of work, just because she has not been properly trained. Moreover, will not such training come harder where hospital habits are firmly fixed? Yet the effort has been made for years to bar private nursing from the training school curriculum or, where that has seemed impossible, to put it off until the last moment as being a drawback rather than a gain. The Waltham Training School, which for many years has given such training to its pupils because it realized what an advantage it was to them and also to the hospital, to which they came back with a better understanding of the patients and a greater capacity to bear responsibility, has been tabooed on this very account. Was it not merely a little ahead of the times? Is not private nursing, like district nursing and the preliminary course, both of which were first introduced into the training at Waltham, destined to become a regular part of the training in many schools?

Massachusetts.

ANNETTE FISKE.

THE OTHER SIDE OF NIGHT DUTY

DEAR EDITOR: As I looked hurriedly over the contents of the May JOURNAL, I saw *The Prosaic Side of Night Duty*. I turned to read it at once, for I have spent at different times no less than one and one-half years of my life on night duty. I do not wish to argue or disagree with anyone, especially not with a fellow nurse; however, if the author of *The Prosaic Side of Night Duty* happens to have any more night duty in store for her, I hope she'll change her attitude.